

Testimony

Senate Bill 2268

House Natural Resources Committee

Friday, March 4, 2005; 10:15 a.m.

North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning, Chairman Nelson and members of the House Natural Resources Committee. My name is Wayne Kern, and I am director of the Division of Waste Management for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide testimony in support of the Senate amendments to Senate Bill 2268, which provides for a Legislative Council study of waste rubber recycling and remediation in North Dakota.

On February 3, the Department of Health testified before the Senate Natural Resources Committee in opposition to Senate Bill 2268 as it was originally introduced. The department identified a number of concerns regarding the bill and indicated that a simpler, less resource-intensive and more workable approach was needed to address the matter of waste tires and other waste rubber through legislation. The bill was subsequently amended to the version before you today.

The Department of Health supports recycling and reuse of solid waste. The study provided in this bill could identify cost-effective recycling and alternative use opportunities with respect to waste tires and other waste rubber in the state.

The management of scrap tires and other waste rubber is a significant solid waste issue. Improperly managed waste tires can blight the landscape and lower property values. They also pose significant public health, safety and environmental concerns. Improperly managed waste tires increase the potential for disease transmission and fires that can result in significant land, air and water pollution.

In North Dakota, waste tires represent a small portion of the total annual waste, estimated to be less than 2 percent by weight. Despite this low percentage, waste tires present unique challenges. The largest landfills in North Dakota do not dispose of whole tires because they are bulky and difficult to bury. Although many tires are sent to legitimate processors or permitted disposal sites, illegal stockpiles have been found in ravines, fence rows, rented warehouses and ditches, creating environmental and liability issues for property owners, tire generators and political subdivisions.

In summary, management of scrap tires and other waste rubber is a significant solid waste issue. The Department supports the study provided for in this bill and future legislation that would enable a practical and workable approach to further address this important matter.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.